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World Chronicle

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PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

KOFI ANNAN, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, discusses the current status, cost and functions of peacekeeping operations around the world. To succeed in its peacekeeping missions, the World Organization needs well equipped and trained troops from donor countries. The United Nations Security Council approves peacekeeping operations with the consent of governments and parties concerned. Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter defines the role and mandate of peacekeeping operations.

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ANNOUNCER: From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is **World Chronicle**, an unedited interview programme about major global issues. Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's **World Chronicle**.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns, and this is **World Chronicle**.

As never before in its 49 years of existence, the United Nations is at the centre of world affairs. At a time of dramatic changes in the international political landscape, the United Nations is being called upon to take on ever increasing responsibilities in the area of peacekeeping and peace maintenance operations. Our guest today oversees the efforts of the world organization in this field. He's Kofi Annan, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. Joining me to talk with Mr. Annan are Trevor Rowe of National Public Radio and Raghida Dergham of *Al-Hayat* of London. Mr. Annan, welcome to World Chronicle.

ANNAN: Thank you.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Under-Secretary-General, the United Nations can't do very much about peacekeeping without the support of the permanent members of the Security Council, particularly the United States. The headline on the front page of *The New York Times* recently said, "New U.S. Peacekeeping Policy Deemphasizes Role of the U.N.", and referred to a presidential decision directive by President Clinton which seems to change the focus of the United States as far as U.N. peacekeeping is concerned. What is your response to that?

ANNAN: Yes, I've seen the article. I think the heading or the headline is a bit misleading. I think what the directive does is to clarify the relationship between the United States and the United Nations and the conditions and the basis under which they would want to participate in peacekeeping operations and the direction they would want to see the organization take, and the sort of broad framework we should use to determine whether we get involved or not. I consider that approach and that document a very healthy and a positive development. At least the U.S. has defined and declared its position, and it's going to make it easier for us and the rest of the member states to relate to them. And so I see it as a positive development. And in that document, they also indicate those areas where they want to work with the Secretariat to strengthen peacekeeping.

There has been some confusion as to the impact of U.N. peacekeeping on U.S. policy and U.S. defence policy. As far as I understand, and I would want to make it quite clear, there has never been any intention on the part of members of this organization or the Secretariat to dictate U.S. policy or to superimpose peacekeeping on U.S. defence policy. Peacekeeping is only one option. Each government has the right to

defend its interests. It can do it unilaterally with all the risk that entails, use regional arrangements like NATO, or tend to collective security arrangements under the U.N., which is an option. Of course, the collective security arrangements have been much more important for some of the smaller countries who have been traditional peacekeepers, and it could be out of their own concern that the only way they can defend themselves is through support and the collective effort of others.

LITTLEJOHNS: This idea that American troops cannot serve under foreign generals -- so-called foreign generals, meaning non-American generals -- is this a problem?

ANNAN: I think it could be a problem if it is applied rigidly. And I don't think they intend to apply it rigidly, and it will be on a case by case basis. And as we speak, we have U.S. troops serving under a Norwegian general in Macedonia, and it's going very well. My sense of the direction of the U.S. government is that the size of the operation, the risks involved, and the number of U.S. troops involved may be the determining factor, whether they insist on a U.S. commander or not. And I think that, by and large, is acceptable to other countries, as we have seen in our preparation for implementation of an UNPROFOR agreement, where about seventy --

LITTLEJOHNS: The operation in former Yugoslavia.

ANNAN: -- former Yugoslavia -- where about 75,000 troops would have been needed, and everybody agreed, including the European countries and others, that if we were to go to that level, they would expect the U.S. to command it. So in the bigger operations, no problem, but I think one has to be flexible.

ROWE: Mr. Annan, the last three years we've seen a truly dramatic increase in the role of peacekeeping at the U.N.. We've seen it rise in the number of troops involved to something like 80,000. Now the U.S. has clarified its position, but it's said among other things that it doesn't want to see an expansion, it wants to be more selective. What is the practical impact of that? Are we going to see a stabilizing or a reduction?

ANNAN: My own feeling is that we are going to be involved in peacekeeping for quite a long time, and the indications are that they will grow. We are looking at possible operations in Georgia, which we are not -- we only have observers there now. If there is an agreement in Angola, there could be an expansion of our presence up to about 7,000 troops. We are now looking at what to do in Rwanda, and all that. And in fact when you look at the U.S. criteria for getting involved in peacekeeping operations, lots of trouble spots could qualify, depending upon how the Council applies it.

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So my sense is that, yes, there will be lots of crises around the world, but perhaps the Council using the new framework will be much more selective as to when and how to get involved.

ROWE: Just to follow up, in this new document that the U.S. has issued, it doesn't endorse stand-by forces and it is not specific about making available U.S. resources, logistical support, air power to deliver other people's peacekeepers. How serious a hindrance is this going to be for you for your planning abilities?

ANNAN: I think it will be helpful for us if we can come to some understanding with the U.S. on what assets they could make available for peacekeeping, whether they're going to provide lift capability to get them into the theatre very quickly, provide some logistical support, logistical units. What is important here is that each government has to respond the way it sees best to our appeal for standby arrangements. Some governments have responded by indicating that they will prepare a 5,000 man unit for peacekeeping. The Danes are doing that, and they are going to inaugurate these arrangements on the 1st of July, and I may be joining them on that occasion. Other governments like the U.S., which have a wide range of capabilities, may not want to pinpoint units which will be available, but could indicate that they can respond very quickly within a week, within a few days, and they have the range.

So we would not insist on earmarking specific units, but we will be prepared to accept an indication that one is willing to respond rapidly and give an idea of the range of units or services one may be able to release at a short notice. And that may be the situation with the U.S.

DERGHAM: If you permit me, Mr. Annan, to walk through with you some details of that directive, it says that the U.S. cannot resolve the conflicts of the world but does not believe that the U.N. is capable of making and keeping peace, particularly when hostages still exist. Now, is this not a statement of fact given the history of the United Nations in as far as the number of failures in peacekeeping operations? And if it's not, is it not a vote of non-confidence in the United Nations?

ANNAN: I think it's a statement of fact following a realistic assessment when we look at the two difficult operations like Somalia and Bosnia. It is quite clear that it is difficult to conduct an operation in a volatile environment where the consent of the parties are not readily forthcoming, where you are sometimes pressed almost across the line between the consent of the parties and using forceful means to coerce them. It is a fact also that you cannot have enforcement and humanitarian operations at the same time. And basically I read that document to say we have to be clear, as an international community, as to how we are going to deal with these crises. We have to make the

analysis up front and determine whether this calls for an enforcement or some other form of reaction from the international community. If you take Iraq and Kuwait, for example, where the international community decided up front that there was going to be an enforcement, prepared and took the appropriate action, I think it would have been extremely difficult if they had had international troops on the ground when they conducted that operation. And I think it's those kinds of judgements that we will have to make, and I have no problem with that statement.

DERGHAM: It's interesting that you just mentioned that it cannot work to have enforcement and humanitarian action. I suppose you're speaking about the failure in doing both in Somalia. Now mind you, the United Nations, the Secretary-General's office has proposed recently to the Security Council to look into doing exactly that in Rwanda, to have peace enforcement because of a humanitarian situation. Now, I'd like to stop at that before I go on to the little details of the directive I have in mind.

ANNAN: I don't think the Secretary-General has proposed a peace enforcement action. He has suggested that we need a much stronger force in Rwanda that will have an impact on the killing that is going on. And I do share that view, that if we were to have a quick reaction force, well equipped, highly mobile, that got into that country, it could help bring about law and order and stop the massacre. And I think it would also then open the way for humanitarian assistance.

DERGHAM: But that's enforcement, Mr. Annan. This is to make sure -- I mean, this isn't to go by the consent of all parties and peacekeeping operation, it is an operation that would have to impose law and order, as you correctly said. So this isn't a matter of --

ANNAN: No, I didn't say impose.

DERGHAM: Well, how would you -- what is --

ANNAN: I said help bring about law and order. And I believe that in some of these situations, if you have a well-organized and mechanized force that goes in, it may be able to show strength without having to use force. You can show force and avoid the use of force. Confront --

ROWE: Except, though, if I may interrupt, the RPF, the Rwandese Patriotic Front, the rebels as they're known, have said they don't want the U.N. going in there, and I think they made it very clear that if the U.N. were to go in there, they would be in a fight. So how could the U.N. function in that environment?

ANNAN: This is a development that occurred only recently. It occurred after the Secretary-General had made his proposal. So under the Secretary-General's proposal, while we are on the ground, and we did go in with a consent, it would have

been reinforcement with mechanized units that would be able to help bring about law and order. If we were to decide to go in without the consent of one of the parties, then the only way we will have to do it is as an enforcement mission under Chapter VII. However, the Front Populaire itself has said they will be open to humanitarian assistance and a force that is geared towards that. But we also have to be aware of the maneuverings going on on the ground. So far the Front Populaire is doing very well, and the winning side always tends to resist an external intervention that might disrupt a perceived success.

DERGHAM: While we are on Rwanda, of course it was the United Nations Secretariat that first suggested the three options and seemed to lean towards decreasing the presence of the international presence there to a minimum. And then things got out of hand, and then there was this talk of an enhancement of the international presence. Except that in this new suggestion of enhancement the United Nations seemed to say to the Africans, well, it is an African problem, put your African boys up front, we're not going to deal with you. Is this because it is an African problem, that there is this attitude that the Africans put their own boys or girls to rescue their own continent? And then I'd like to get into what the OAU has been saying back to you.

ANNAN: Let me start with the first question. Yes, three options were put to the Council. But the three options were put to the Council in reaction to a certain reality we were faced with. Once the Belgians decided to leave, the remaining forces could only continue their work and implement their mandate if they were reinforced. If no governments were willing to go in with reinforcements at that time, and one of the other contingents was trying to leave, then you had to give the remaining troops a mandate that they could implement. And I think that was a realistic option that was placed before the Council at the time the Council made its decision.

Things worsened quite dramatically after that initial discussion, and the SG did ask the Council to reconsider. The Secretary-General has also written to 21 African countries who are participating or have participated in past peacekeeping operations to provide troops. We are in the process of offering them the concept of operations, the possible tasks they will be required to do, the force structure, requirements and equipment for them to be able to respond realistically and rationally. Because without those elements, they cannot really respond.

On your third question, why do we say that it's only African countries who should do this, I think it's a legitimate question: we are a universal organization, and we have to face these issues collectively, particularly those of us who are concerned about human rights. I mean, we fight to get people out of jail, we fight to give them freedom of

speech. We cannot stand back when they are being deprived of the most fundamental of all rights, the right to life.

I made this point clear when I visited Washington recently, that the Africans can help but they cannot do it alone. Because we are dealing with a situation that demands urgent response, that requires troops which are highly mobile, well equipped, to be able to make a difference. And somebody has to offer lift capabilities and all that. And at the end of the day, the only way to do it is pooling resources of the membership at large. And my sense is that that is going to happen.

LITTLEJOHNS: This is World Chronicle. Our guest is Kofi Annan, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. Mr. Annan, we haven't talked about the financial burden for the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, and I believe the arrears now amount to well over a $1 billion, is that so?

ANNAN: That's correct.

LITTLEJOHNS: And the United States owes $670 million?

ANNAN: I think by September it will owe $1.3 billion.

LITTLEJOHNS: $1.3 billion. But I read a figure of $670 million, which the United States was trying -- which the administration was trying to get the Congress to approve. That's just a partial payment.

ANNAN: That's correct. But if that amount is approved and let's say is paid between now and September, it will reduce the outstanding contribution to about roughly $300 million, or it will bring them to the level of about $300 million. The President did call all the committee chairmen and stressed the need for them to work with him in releasing money to the U.N., and I think this is the first time that I think it has happened in this current administration.

ROWE: I'd like to ask you about fatigue. We have donor fatigue in the form of financial fatigue in some cases, but you also have fatigue in terms of troops contributions. This really became evident when you had the massacre in Burundi, and you had 100,000 people killed and there was -- the U.N., apart from issuing a few statements, did not really act. And now we have Rwanda, which is a horrifying situation. The Secretary-General's talking about 200,000 people killed. And recently the Secretary-General made a rather startling statement. He said that had 5,000 peacekeepers been sent to Rwanda, it could have prevented the massacres. First of all, I'm assuming he means if they had gotten in there early. Is that not a very terrible indictment of the international community for having failed to do so?

ANNAN: I think you put your finger on some of the difficulties we are having. Whether it's donor fatigue, whether it's unwillingness to place troops in harm's way

following what happened in Somalia and what we are witnessing in Bosnia, we do have difficulties getting troops from the governments. And in the case of Rwanda, it may be true that if we had had a greater number of troops there we would have made a difference, but I'm not sure that it would necessarily have stopped the massacre. This is a deep-rooted and deep-seated antagonism and an enmity which has existed for years. And I think we are seeing something that has been simmering for a long time. Whether 5,000 could have nipped it in the bud, 5,000 troops, it's questionable, but it may be possible. But the fact is when we needed to send in additional troops, we did not have them, and even now that we've made an appeal, those who are in a position to provide well-equipped, well-trained troops have not offered. And we are turning to those who, in effect, do not have the means to take urgent action. And I would hope that, in the end, everybody will chip in to take some reasonable action.

LITTLEJOHNS: But then it may be too late, Mr. Annan.

ANNAN: This is it. Every day we wait thousands are dying, and that is the serious indictment that the international community will have to -- and our own conscience.... Whether it happens in our region, whether it happens next door to our own country, when we see this sort of massacre and we do nothing, I think each of us is diminished and we have to have this on our conscience for a long time.

DERGHAM: Maybe that statement is correct and the United Nations is incapable of carrying out these operations, due to what you're saying.

ANNAN: The United Nations can be -- and I think here we have to make clear which United Nations we are talking about. And I'm making this point because the general public sometimes do not realize we have two United Nations -- the United Nations that is made up of the Secretariat, the humble civil servants who follow through the decisions and guidance given by the member states, who take the decisions, who give us the mandate in situations like Rwanda and also have to provide the resources to do it. So we can be as effective and as strong as the member states want us to be. And if they do not provide an effective mandate, if they do not provide the resources even after they have provided the mandate, there's nothing we can do. So when we talk of the United Nations in this context, I hope we are putting the blame fairly and squarely where it belongs.

DERGHAM: Except that the Secretariat, for example, had rejected troop contributors who, because from the point of the view of the Secretariat, they would have been controversial. I'm speaking about Bosnia, I'm speaking about the Moslem countries particularly, Iran, who had said look, I would put as many troops as possible under your auspices to do what you want, whereas the Secretariat had agreed that the

Russian troops would be in Bosnia-Herzegovina, though they are known for their alliance with the Serbs. So now is that not a decision made by the Secretariat? And is it not a bad decision, because now that you need troops, for example, in Rwanda, you can't just call the Iranians or the Turks and say help us out there. This is -- there is something -- I think that the Secretariat should sort of admit its responsibility. Its part of the responsibility in this overall failure of the United Nations.

ANNAN: I think, first of all, it's not the Secretariat that determines which country or which troops participate in an operation. Each participation is approved by the Council. In some cases we have to make a judgement whether the Council will approve participation of a particular country or not. If, in our judgment, the Council is not going to approve it, I don't think it is fair to embarrass any government by putting its name forward to the Council for participation in an operation to be rejected by the Council. And in fact, often the countries concerned know that the judgement is correct, and if they did not know that the judgement was correct, they have the right of writing to the president of the Council and forcing the issue, that we would want to participate.

But the reason why we have sometimes hesitated from allowing certain countries to participate is from experience, we've learned that where you bring in neighbouring countries or countries with historical and particular interest in a particular conflict or in a particular country where we are facing a crisis, it can be counterproductive. And this explains why it took us quite a long time to agree to the participation of Turkey, but we were forced by the realities of the situation to do it. But we did maintain that, not just Iran, that Germany, Turkey, Italy were also not to participate.

ROWE: I'd just like to follow up on Bosnia, and that is you spoke of the incompatibility of carrying out humanitarian operations and using force. Now, these are still colliding in Bosnia. And the question, I guess the obvious question, is you are carrying out humanitarian operations in Bosnia, but there have also been threats to launch air strikes. Does the fact that -- since the two are incompatible, do the humanitarian operations nullify the threats?

ANNAN: Yeah, I think there's no doubt that the presence of humanitarian personnel and U.N. peacekeeping forces on the ground has had some impact on the level of air strikes or air power that has been used. But when I talk of enforcement, let me make a distinction here. We often talk of Chapter VI, Chapter VII and peace enforcement.

LITTLEJOHNS: These are articles of the Charter.

ANNAN: Charter, yes. But when I say peace enforcement, I'm moving in fact even slightly beyond the Chapter VII as we know it.

LITTLEJOHNS: Chapter VII making it mandatory for enforcement --

ANNAN: Yes, enforcement. Yes, you see, because in the enforcement operation, which in some way the Desert Storm war was, where we took a decision and the Council authorized a group of member states to do it, it was clear, the nature of the operation, it was prepared, and we may show we did not have position on the ground that would have deterred us from acting.

In the Bosnia situation, we have a humanitarian mandate. Because of the dangerous environment in which we are working, the Council has agreed that close air support can be used to protect the U.N. troops, and it can also be used to -- air strikes can be used to protect the safe havens. In those two instances, it's very specific. And it's proscribed for the very reason that I'm talking about. If you were to have a pervasive peace enforcement, an enforcement action, you can very well not carry on peacekeeping or humanitarian activity. And this is in a way the contradiction or the conflict we face. And that's why when the U.N. peacekeepers -- who have a much broader mandate, which covers political, humanitarian, diplomatic, civil affairs and others -- often worry about what happens tomorrow. We need to keep on our mandate. We need to keep the humanitarian aid flowing. As opposed to NATO, which has been a war machine and has been brought in to support the diplomatic and the broader effort of the U.N. And I think in this coordination and cooperation between NATO and U.N., we've both learned something. If I were to summarize, that when we operate in situations like Bosnia, perhaps the U.N. has to find a way of perhaps packing a punch, and NATO has to find a way of pulling a punch, and then we will go forward.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Annan, that's all the time we have. Thank you for being with us on this edition of World Chronicle. Our guest has been Kofi Annan, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations for Peacekeeping Operations. He was interviewed by Trevor Rowe of National Public Radio and Raghida Dergham of *Al-Hayat* of London. I'm Michael Littlejohns, thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of World Chronicle.

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